2. BEHAVIOUR OF CHITAL *AXIS AXIS* (ERXLEBEN)

In the tidal forests of the Sunderbans there used to be (and, I believe, still are) large herds of Chital deer. The predominant areas are however in East Pakistan now. When I was a probationer, in charge of a Range (1942-43), we could see deer as we liked. At almost every turn of the creek (particularly bigger ones) one could come across herds of Chital numbering anything from a dozen to more than 100, on the banks exposed at low tide. The interesting part was that few stags could be spotted as they would run into the forests at the approach of a motor launch, but the fawns and does would not run away. I remember taking small motor launches as close as 3 to 4 feet of them and yet they would not budge. In fact they would come forward to meet the launch. If, however, one approached them in a dinghy, the entire herd would disappear into the forest. This we associated with the poachers who normally came in country boats and did indiscriminate shooting.

In the Sunderbans, the deer are also known to follow troops of Rhesus monkeys to feed on the leaves and fruits dropped by the monkeys. In fact it was a standard method to mimic the chatter of monkeys to lure deer. If imitated by someone adept in the art, and accompanied by shaking and shedding of branches, leaves and fruits, the deer would arrive within minutes. I have witnessed it time and again.

I kept a pair of fawns as pets in the Sunderbans and I remember that whenever at breakfast, we started peeling bananas, both the fawns would make a bee-line for the table apparently attracted by the scent of the banana which they could get from beyond several rooms.

WRITERS' BUILDINGS,
CALCUTTA-1,
WEST BENGAL,
June 23, 1966.

K. C. ROY CHOUDHURY
Chief Conservator of Forests (Offg.)

3. RAVENS AND BROWN BEAR

Many times when stalking big game in the Himalayas, I have seen Ravens in parties of 2 to 4 give away the presence of Brown Bear. The bear while digging for grubs is followed by the Ravens and after it moves on they pick up the grubs left by it.

Last month a friend of mine, while trying to photograph Markhor, saw a Brown Bear stretched out and four or five Ravens pecking at

its head and body. Thinking that the bear was dead he approached close to it and threw a stone. To his great surprise the bear was very much alive and angry and after a few very loud woofs ran off. I am sure that the Ravens were picking ticks off the bear. In Markhor areas there are hundreds of ticks, and when stalking Markhor, one has to go through a thorough de-ticking after returning to camp in the evening. I am sure the Brown Bear was enjoying the Ravens pecking away at the ticks.

NEDOU'S HOTEL,
GULMARG, SRINAGAR, COL. H. NEDOU
KASHMIR,
June 28, 1966.

4. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE EGGS OF THE INDIAN HILL PARTRIDGES OF THE GENUS *ARBOROPHILA*

There are four species of Hill Partridge in the Indian Himalayan region. The Common Hill Partridge, *Arborophila torqueola*, occurs in temperate forest at higher altitudes from 4,000 to 10,000 ft. and over. The Rufousthroated Hill Partridge, *A. rufogularis*, occupies lower zones from about 2,000 to 8,000 ft., while the Whitecheeked Hill Partridge, *A. atrogularis* is present from the plains level up to 5,000 ft. The fourth species, the Redbreasted Hill Partridge, *A. mandellii*, is rarer than the other three and has been recorded from 1,000 to 8,000 ft. (Ripley 1961).

The eggs of these species in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History), which have been assembled from various sources, give the following size ranges—*A. torqueola*, length 43·5-45·5, breadth 33·3-33·7 (3 eggs measured; Whistler [1919] quoted a c/9 taken near Simla as having length 42·5-46, breadth 32·5-34); *A. rufogularis*, length 41·5-42·8, breadth 29·5-31 (19 eggs measured); and *A. atrogularis*, length 35·5-38·8, breadth 27·6-29·5 (17 eggs measured), all measuements being in millimetres. No eggs of *A. mandellii* were available.

These species vary in size and one can obtain some index of this from the wing-lengths. The following measurements were made—7 females of *A. torqueola* 138-146; 7 females of *A. rufogularis* 125-134;3 females of *A. atrogularis* 126-129; 3 females of *A. mandellii* 128-131. The males are consistently larger than the females in the first three species, but in *A. mandellii* the sexes are similar in size.